

IMPACT



INSIDE: We are stronger together: A reflection from Carla Roberts PAGE 3



FREMONT AREA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

SUMMER 2020

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ABOUT THE COVER

One of the major themes for our work this year is the idea that **we are stronger together**. In a period of time rife with division and dissension, it has become increasingly important to recognize our shared goals as well as the areas where we are not doing enough. We can only accomplish great things by working together. The cover of this newsletter shows the faces of many individuals connected to the Community Foundation, including board trustees, committee members, donors, grantees, and those who benefit from programs run by the amazing nonprofit organizations in Newaygo County. We all belong to each other—that's the real power of community.



recently

CARLA A. ROBERTS
President and CEO



WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

Like most of the country, the past five months have been difficult for our community. We are facing a pandemic, growing economic distress, and grappling with the systems and institutions that perpetuate racial disparities in our nation. I grew up in the 1960s and witnessed civil rights events on television and the very streets of my hometown. I carried those experiences with me into early adulthood along with a sense of hope for the future. Our country has not come far enough—the events of the past few months show that starkly—but I do think this groundswell shows how powerful it is when we come together towards a common goal.

We instinctively know that we are stronger together.

There is something human about that. Fremont Area Community Foundation exists to serve every person in Newaygo County, regardless of our differences, backgrounds, or the color of our skin. It has become increasingly apparent that our organization has an important role to play to ensure that all members of this community have equal access to opportunity and a high quality of life. We haven't always gotten it right, but our board and staff know that action—not neutrality—on issues of injustice and inequity must be at the core of our work. That's why we are listening, educating ourselves, and taking a closer look at the way we do business both internally and externally. We plan to share more about these efforts in the future.

Newaygo County is a collaborative community, but the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a deep fragility underneath. Far too many of our families cannot make ends meet. Socioeconomic and racial disparities have been exacerbated. The systems that vulnerable populations relied on were not built to

withstand months of near-constant change. These things make us realize how much we need each other. That's why our organization has been actively working with local partners to implement strategies to help our neighbors.

When the crisis first hit in March, we focused on immediate, short-term needs through the creation of our **Community Response Fund**. This fund was created in collaboration with United Way-Newaygo County to rapidly deploy resources to nonprofit organizations on the front line of COVID-19 relief efforts. To date, this fund has granted out \$360,485 to organizations across the region. We are also grateful for the \$61,255 donated directly to the fund by generous individuals, families, and organizations.

Now that many aspects of our state's economy are reopened, we are adjusting to a new normal. Organizations and businesses are adapting to fewer volunteers or staff, new safety protocols, trying to maintain talent, and absorbing financial losses. We are all learning to live with ebbing levels of uncertainty. In order to support one of the hardest-hit sectors—the small business community—we announced the creation of our **Small Business Recovery Loan Program** with MSU Federal Credit Union this month. Read more about this program on page 6.

This crisis is far from over and collaboration and creativity will be vital to our success. We believe in this community's ability to repair, rally together, and rebuild equitable systems that will ensure we will meet the next crisis stronger and more unified than ever. We thank you for your partnership and look forward to what we will accomplish together.

community response grants

Our Community Response Fund has provided grants to organizations across the county. Here are a few examples.

TrueNorth Community Services

\$129,250

PURPOSE: To allow TrueNorth to continue providing a variety of essential services, including food assistance

As the pandemic and subsequent shutdowns began, demand quickly escalated for TrueNorth's fixed and mobile food pantries, weekend food packs for students, and food deliveries to homebound seniors. The need has remained high.

WHY IT MATTERS: Before the pandemic began, TrueNorth served an average of 30 clients per day at their food pantry and 100 families at monthly mobile pantry stops. On March 25, more than 90 clients visited the food pantry and 212 received food boxes at the mobile pantry. The need for food assistance has continued to grow. At a mid-July mobile pantry, 241 households were served.

Catholic Charities West Michigan

\$11,125

PURPOSE: To provide continued support for participants in Catholic Charities' Senior Corps programs

Grant funds helped provide food deliveries for senior volunteers and clients in Lake and Newaygo counties.

WHY IT MATTERS: Senior Corps volunteers work in local schools as Foster Grandparents, providing valuable help in classrooms and allowing seniors to earn a stipend. Catholic Charities was committed to ensuring these volunteers had food to replace daily lunches they lost access to when schools closed and to continuing to provide stipends.

Michigan Works! West Central

\$28,000

PURPOSE: To provide support services to those filing for unemployment

Many people facing layoffs due to COVID-19 are filing for unemployment for the first time. Through local Success Coaches, Michigan Works! West Central provides support services like crisis budgeting, debt negotiations, and credit assistance.

WHY IT MATTERS: Michigan's unemployment rate increased from under four percent in February to more than 21 percent in May. Many people are contacting Michigan Works! West Central for the first time, and Success Coaches are ready to provide support, guidance, and access to resources.



support during a pandemic

Women's Information Service, Inc (WISE)

Imagine navigating a pandemic and stay-at-home orders when home is a dangerous place. This has been the daily reality for too many in our community who experience domestic and sexual violence.

“With abusers in the home, without them leaving for work or recreation, a victim does not have an opportunity to escape,” said Jane Currie, executive director of Women’s Information Service, Inc (WISE). “Additionally, if the individuals lost pay or his or her job, the stress can cause an already volatile situation to escalate.”

For years, WISE has provided crisis intervention and support services to survivors in Mecosta, Newaygo, and Osceola counties. The organization offers emergency shelter, a 24-hour hotline, advocacy services, and more. COVID-19 has not changed their mission, but it has changed how services can be delivered. The shelter was

reconfigured to allow for social distancing, already careful cleaning practices were quadrupled, and group support meetings moved online. Advocates were not able to remain with sexual assault survivors during forensic exams, but they stayed with them on the phone.

While dedication and creativity allowed the work to continue, WISE’s budget wasn’t built to accommodate these unforeseen changes. A pair of grants from the Community Foundation’s Community Response Fund helped fill the gaps.

“This has been a truly bright light during this unprecedented time,” said Jane. “We could not have provided this continued work without the Community Response Fund. It gave us what we needed to continue providing the services to survivors, giving them hope for a new life in the midst of this pandemic.”

SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY LOANS

The Community Foundation recently announced a partnership with MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) to create the Small Business Recovery Loan Program. Up to \$3.4 million is being leveraged by the Community Foundation with MSUFCU to support businesses in Newaygo County. Loans from \$5,000 to \$50,000 are available for Newaygo County businesses with 50 or fewer full-time employees. The terms of the loan are favorable with a low interest rate and up to a five-year term. Both nonprofit and for-profit entities are eligible to apply, including service, retail, agriculture, commercial, and industrial businesses. For more information about the program, visit facommunityfoundation.org/loans. You can also reach program contacts Don Farmer and Dan Wheat directly at loan@facommunityfoundation.org to discuss eligibility and begin the application process.



GIVING TO THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND



Since the Community Response Fund was created in March, generous people and organizations have donated \$61,255 to support local organizations and the people they serve. Stuart and Kay Stone were early donors to the fund. When the pandemic began, they wanted to support local relief efforts in the most effective way possible. “The first place we looked to contribute in this time of need was the Community Response Fund,” said Stuart. “We have faith that the Community Foundation will support the organizations that can help the most.” Stuart and Kay have a long history of commitment to this community and, in addition to volunteering at local organizations, they created a scholarship at the Community Foundation for graduates in Grant.

noteworthy

TWO NEW TRUSTEES

We were excited to welcome Rolly Reed and Mikhail Salacina to our Board of Trustees in June. Rolly (left) is a CPA and partner at H&S Companies and Mikhail (right) is an attorney and partner with Schuiteman & Salacina, PLC. Both grew up in Newaygo County and look forward to giving back to the community through their board service.



SPRING GRANT AWARDS

More than \$2.6 million was awarded in our most recent community grant round. Grants will support a variety of programs and initiatives including food assistance, mental healthcare, education programs, and general operating support for local nonprofit organizations. Applications for community grants are accepted twice each year; the next application deadline is September 1.

CELEBRATING YAC SENIORS

While we didn't get to honor our Youth Advisory Committee grads in person this year, we still want to celebrate them! During their four years on YAC, Emma Kartes, Chance Stebelton, Jemi Perrin, Logan Balkema, and Wyatt Phillips (left to right) gave hundreds of hours, helped award more than \$300,000 in grants, and grew as leaders and philanthropists. We wish them the best as they start their next chapters.





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LEAVE A LEGACY OF SUPPORT

Bob and Susanne Jordan have made giving back an important part of their lives. From job selection—social work for Susanne and nearly 20 years at the Community Foundation for Bob—to volunteer service, they are invested in the success of Newaygo County. In addition to creating a donor advised fund, they have also included the Community Foundation in their estate plan to ensure sustainability for the future.

Remembering the Community Foundation in your will or estate plan is an easy way to leave a personal legacy and ensure a bright future for your community. To get started, contact our philanthropic services team at 231.924.5350.

